

FROM THE COMMUNITY THAT GOT HIM STARTED

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 24, 1998

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, the success of local events is directly the result of the commitment of individuals who want to make sure that the events do succeed. The people of Bay City have been most fortunate to see the success of the annual Bay City Fireworks Festival, and this success is due in large part to the outstanding support the Festival has received from Thomas LaPorte.

In 1995, learning that the Bay City Fireworks Festival was in a grave financial condition and that the event might not go forward, Tom LaPorte came forward with more than \$70,000 to insure that the event would take place in 1996. This was a wonderful act, but it was something the people of Bay City had come to expect from Tom. He has given money to accident victims, loan money to other small business facing difficult times, and providing emergency transport to stranded or hardship cases in his corporate plane. And throughout these efforts, he has also had the strong support of his wife Mary, and his sons, Jon and Patrick.

Tom LaPorte and his brother Larry ran their family shoe store for over twenty-five years in downtown Bay City. He started Mortgage America almost fifteen years ago in a small room in his home, and has now grown that operation to two buildings with 180 employees. They have been a major source of support and a force for growth of a significant number of local efforts, including the Logan Gaza Fund, the Bay Arts Council, the Bay City Clock Tower Committee, the Try City Cyclist Club, the Downtown Management Board, the Bay Area Chamber of Commerce, the Kent Huber Scholarship Fund, Created for Caring, the Bay County Women's Center, and many, many more.

The Bay City Fireworks Festival has been restored to its former greatness by the continuing support from Tom LaPorte, including over \$200,000 in cash in and in-kind gifts over the past three years, plus promotion of other fund raisers for the event.

People may wonder why an individual does so much. When he was asked about it one day, Tom LaPorte said "I want to give back to the City I love and the community that got me started." Mr. Speaker, that is an attitude that deserves to be applauded and emulated as often as possible. I urge you and all of our colleagues to join me in thanking and congratulating Tom LaPorte for his community spirit, his kind generosity and his enlightened leadership.

ANDRE NICHOLSON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WINNER 1977-98 VFW VOICE OF DEMOCRACY SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 24, 1998

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and its La-

dies Auxiliary sponsor the Voice of Democracy audio-essay scholarship competition. The program is now in its 51st year and required high school student entrants to write and record a three to five minute essay on an announced patriotic theme. "My Voice in our Democracy" was this year's theme, and more than 100,000 students participated in the program nationwide.

Mr. Speaker, I am extremely proud to report to this body that Andre R. Nicholson, a senior at Ballou Senior High School has been named a National winner in the 1998 Voice of Democracy Program and recipient of the \$1,000 Department of Nevada and its Ladies Auxiliary Scholarship Award. Andre is the son of Robin and Jane Nicholson and he plans a career in marketing. Andre participated in the program as a project of his government class. I am pleased to acknowledge his teacher, Paul Charles and his principal, Kenneth Jones, Ph.D.

Mr. Speaker, I submit for the reflections of the Members in this hallowed hall Andre Nicholson's award winning essay.

"MY VOICE IN OUR DEMOCRACY"

Good afternoon Honorable Judges and members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

As a young man in high school, it is an honor and pleasure for me to participate in the VFW Voice of Democracy Scholarship Program. I hope that not only my voice in our Democracy will be heard but other voices young and old, as we enter the twenty-first century.

In Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address he stated "that this government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

The basic premise of democracy cries out that each individual's worth and dignity must be recognized and respected by all of society at all times; regardless of race, religion, or station in life.

Dr. King once said he had a dream, and that dream was that one day this nation would live out the true meaning of its creed, we hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal.

The concepts of democracy go on to insist all men should be equal before the law and by way of opportunity; that the majority should rule restrained by minority rights. It also states that we must compromise to find a satisfactory solution and that the freedom of one individual should not infringe upon others.

This has been an experiment in government, and like all experiments it's been a trial and error process, good times and bad times, sunshine and rain.

However, if we the people of the United States are to form a more perfect union; we must be willing to grow along spiritual lines. On the back of one of our most prized possession (the dollar bill) is the statement "In God We Trust." If we would try more diligently to seek and do God's will, we as human beings would exhibit more God-like characteristics such as honesty, consideration, tolerance, forgiveness, faith, patience and concern for others.

By doing this I think the democratic process would run smoother and we would form a more perfect union.

Will my voice be heard in our Democracy? Yes, I believe that my voice, as well as other young adults will be heard. In order to have a unified democracy to improve our country, it is vital that the voices of the young and the old go together in order to make this a better world.

Too many individuals, such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and James

Madison, put in countless hours of work in order for us to have a good constitution in a democratic society. We must continue and push hard. I know we can make it work.

CORRECTION OF OMISSIONS AND SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO LANCE FELLER

HON. FRANK RIGGS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 24, 1998

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, after the class of House Pages from the Fall Semester of 1997 left Washington, the names of several Pages were omitted from the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. I rise today to correct this unfortunate oversight.

Additionally, I would like to personally recognize Lance Feller of Del Norte County, California, in my Congressional District. Lance is an excellent student who recently exhibited his own leadership skills by winning election to the post of President of the California Association of Student Councils (CASC) Region 1 for the 1998/1999 school year. Region 1 includes 184 high schools and covers a land mass larger than several states.

Congressional Pages are an important part of the day-to-day operation of the United States House of Representatives. Many former pages now serves as Members of this House, while others have gone on to be leaders in business and other pursuits. Mr. Speaker, I expect that Lance Feller will put the skills and experiences learned in the Page program to good use, not just in the near future, but throughout his entire life.

I also would like to recognize some of the other Pages who served with Lance, but who were not recognized previously. They are: Brook Burns, Shayla Canty, Katie Crocker, Erin DiGiglia, William Haliburton, Anne Metz, Moremi Oladeinde, Aja Sims, Kimbrell Smith, Summer Smith, Colleen Deegan and Demarcus Ward. I am sure they will all take the lessons learned as Pages here in Washington, D.C. and apply them throughout their lives as they, too, strive to be leaders in their hometowns.

TRIBUTE TO FOSTER GRANDPARENTS

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 24, 1998

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor some wonderful foster grandparents in Lenawee County who recently received recognition for their fifteen years of service. It's my pleasure to offer my congratulations and best wishes to three foster grandparents in particular—Mickie Diebel, Theta Luscumb, and Marie Schwalm.

Since January 1983, Maxine (Mickie) Diebel has provided love and support for children with special needs. These youngsters, first at the Adrian Training School and currently at McKinley Elementary School, have flourished due in large part to Mickie's nurturing and guidance. Mickie has been a magnificent role